

I am proud to be a co-sponsor. I have made the improvement of our nation's public education system one of my top priorities as a legislator, and I believe that the Ed-Flex bill represents an important step towards the fulfillment of this goal. This legislation should not be viewed as a solution to the myriad problems which plague our schools, but I wholeheartedly support it and hope that the valuable debate it generates will catalyze our continued efforts on critical education issues.

H.R. 800 extends to all 50 states the opportunity to participate in the "Ed-Flex" program, currently in place as a demonstration program in 12 states. Under Ed-Flex, the Department of Education allows states to grant local school districts waivers to certain federal regulations if the state believes such a waiver would enhance local school reform efforts. I believe it is important for those of us in Washington to recognize that local officials, parents, teachers and students are often in a better position to creatively and effectively address the particular educational issues being faced in their communities. H.R. 800 will allow localities the flexibility to begin responding to the unique needs of their school systems, and I embrace any measure that will help our children obtain the top-quality education they need and deserve.

I must voice some concern that the accountability provisions of H.R. 800 are not as strong as they should be. I am, for example, disappointed that this body did not agree to the Miller-Kildee amendment, which would have required states to have in place a viable plan for assessing student achievement, as well as concrete goals for such achievement. In addition, it must be clearly understood that, although Ed-Flex can be an important component of our education reform efforts this session, many critical issues remain to be addressed, such as class size, school safety and student discipline.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting Ed-Flex today, not because it solves all of our problems, but because it represents a substantive bipartisan effort to begin addressing the many difficulties which plague our local school systems. I am pleased that we are getting an early start in meeting our obligations to America's students, and I look forward to confronting these crucial education issues as the 106th Congress continues.

EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY
PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 800) to provide for education flexibility partnerships:

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chairman, I take this time to state for the record my reasons for voting against H.R. 800 the Ed-Flex bill.

Mr. Chairman, I am not opposed to the idea of flexibility in education. I laud my colleagues

for their desire to work on the education issues facing our country. Ed-Flex has the potential to be a workable program that provides states and local school districts with the flexibility to improve academic achievements and the quality of education for their students.

However, I believe that we need to protect those students who come from families in need. The intent of Congress, through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary School Act, was to target funds toward low-income students, in order to help them have a chance at success in life. I could not vote for Ed-Flex unless I was sure that students from low-income families are not going to lose their funds through waivers. This is why I supported the Scott-Payne amendment, which would have required that only schools in which at least 35% of the students come from low-income families may seek a waiver to use their Title I funds to operate a school-wide program. For my New York City District, this provision is especially important. We have many students coming from low-income families in the Bronx and Queens, and I cannot support a program that does not have provision to prohibit funds being taken away from those needy students.

I am also concerned about the timing of this legislation. In the coming year, we need to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It does not make sense to me that we pass legislation to waive the requirements that we have not even written yet! The best solution would have been to consider Ed-Flex and ESEA together. Then, we could have worked to alleviate my concerns, and those of my colleagues, regarding the targeting of ESEA funds under the provisions of the Ed-Flex program.

Finally, I would like to express my dismay that the majority did not allow class-size reduction and school construction initiatives to be attached to H.R. 800. Public schools are working hard to raise academic standards and improve student achievement, but in many schools their efforts are hampered by overcrowded classes and inadequate and deteriorating facilities. Smaller class sizes improve student learning and are effective in improving student achievement. But we cannot reduce class size without considering the condition and lack of space in school facilities. These issues go hand-in-hand. This is why I feel Ed-Flex should not have been considered now, but rather considered along with ESEA and school construction.

I strongly support bipartisan efforts to strengthen our school systems and help our students. I look forward to working with my colleagues on school construction legislation and on reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It is with regret that I had to vote against the first education bill on the floor of the House in the 106th Congress and I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to outline my reasons for my opposition to H.R. 800.

HONORING REVEREND DR. H.M.
CRENSHAW

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work and achievements of a shepherd to our entire community, Reverend Dr. H.M. Crenshaw, a spiritual leader of enormous dimension. Reverend Crenshaw's 30 years of personal ministry to the Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church congregation is to be recognized in a special celebration in Toledo, OH on March 13, 1999.

After his ordination as a minister in 1952, Reverend Crenshaw pastored in the First Baptist Church of Rossford, Ohio from 1953 until 1958. He then went on to First Baptist Church in Fostoria, OH, and during his decade-long tenure there he led the congregation in the building of a new church as well as the purchase of additional land. In December of 1968, Reverend Crenshaw was called to minister to the congregation of Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church, where he remains today.

A true community leader, Reverend Crenshaw has guided his congregation through growth, property acquisition, and building expansion and enhancement. Through it all, he has been a revitalizing force both in the community and the church. Recognizing the deeper needs of the youth in the church's neighborhood, Reverend Crenshaw founded the Jerusalem Outreach Center in 1982. With a goal to motivate and direct young people not targeted by other programs to fully realize their greatest potential, Reverend Crenshaw and the Jerusalem Outreach Center staff have helped over 1,675 at-risk youth and their families. Working through referrals from the juvenile court and juvenile justice systems, the local school system and an area mentoring program, the Jerusalem Outreach Center has redirected the path for these young people and their families. Further, the center serves as a beacon in the neighborhood: a welcoming place for the youth.

Ever mindful of the need to provide stewardship to promising young people, Reverend and Mrs. Crenshaw established the Crenshaw Scholarship Fund in memory of their deceased daughter Marilyn. This fund has contributed over \$12,500.00 toward the college education of students in the church.

The holder of a Bachelor of Theology from the International Bible Institute and Seminary, a Master of Arts in Psychology and Counseling from Ashland Theological Seminary, a Doctorate of Divinity from Calvary Bible College, and an Honorary Doctorate from Selma University, Reverend Crenshaw is the author of a book, "A Reality Roadmap for Delinquent Youth" and a teaching video, "The Reality of Therapeutic Techniques in Working with Delinquent Youth."

In addition to pastoring to his congregation, engaging in outreach to troubled youth, and raising a family, Reverend Crenshaw has also found time to serve on several key area boards including the Lucas County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, Lucas County